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For Immediate Release:

EIU ENROLLMENT UP; FRESHMAN CLASS SETS NEW RECORD

CHARLESTON – Official figures released following the 10th day of classes at Eastern Illinois University indicate a total Fall 2002 enrollment of 11,163 – an increase of 632 (6 percent) from last year's figure of 10,531.

Already anticipating an increase in student enrollment, especially among freshmen, the university community was excited to learn that a record has been set.

There are a total of 2,751 freshmen enrolled at Eastern this fall, making it the largest freshman class in the university's history. The number represents an increase of 593 freshmen from a year ago.

Interim President Louis V. Hencken believes this fall's increase in student enrollment can be attributed to a collaborative effort by students, faculty and staff. "The campus has rallied together in order to realize our goal of increased enrollment," Hencken said. "It would be wrong to credit any one person or department for that success."

He did note, however, that the provost's office, deans and department chairs should be lauded for planning and providing the classes needed to handle the large increase.

"It's an exciting time for us," said Blair Lord, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "We've put a lot of effort into recruitment during the past year, and it's great to see our efforts rewarded."

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Eastern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

While Lord acknowledges that part of the gain stems from an increase in the overall number of Spring 2002 Illinois high school graduates (close to 4,000 more than a year ago), he, too, does not dismiss the efforts of Eastern's own community in attracting new students to campus.

A breakdown of Eastern's total 2002 student enrollment is as follows: undergraduate students, 9,528 – freshmen, 2,751; sophomores, 1,743; juniors, 2,164; and seniors, 2,870; and graduate students, 1,635. Of the total, 9,241 are full-time and 1,922 are part-time. Also of the total, 4,630 are men and 6,533 are women.

The number of graduate students attending Eastern increased by 220 students (or 15.5 percent) over last fall's enrollment of 1,415.

"Many professionals return to campus for graduate study during a slow economy," Lord said. "Graduate school provides opportunities to move into new career paths or opportunities to advance within an organization."

The university's minority enrollment rose for a fourth consecutive year, with minority students representing nearly 10 percent of total enrollment. The figure jumped to 1,099 this fall – an increase of 88. The number of international students remained steady at 148 – an increase of three over Fall 2001.

In addition, the number of first-time undergraduate transfer students increased to 997, up from 938 in Fall 2001.

Hencken said Eastern will concentrate efforts in the coming months on managing enrollment so that the numbers of students are more evenly distributed among class levels.